1:Du Bois .E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS



of the children themselves are also of interest here. Certain points may be made in connection with the sleeping habits and any disturbances the child might be supposed to feel at being displaced by the father. First, the child's dependency on the mother is less marked than in our culture; second, the child is given genital satisfaction through deliberate masturbation. One of the favorite substitutes for offering the breast in an effort to pacify a child is to manage its genitals gently. It was my impression that this device for pacifying children was used even more by siblings than by adults. If the observation is correct, the explanation may be found in two factors: First, the sibling acting as mother-surrogate cannot pacify the child by offering it food, and second, the young sibling may have fewer occasions to express sex interest than the adult. [353] 354 364

No effort is made during infancy to teach the child to talk. Although an adult may sing dance songs to soothe it, there is no deliberate attempt to impart verbal training. At most, the only talking I have seen an adult direct toward a child is the repetition of its name. 348

Toilet training, too, is completely disregarded during the prewalking period. Adults exhibit no anger or disgust when a child soils the carrying shawl or the body of the person caring for it. The caretaker cleans up after the child with the most casual matter-of-factness, wiping off its buttocks with a bit of leaf, a corn husk, or a bamboo sliver. 363

Nor is walking urged on the child. Crawling is confined to the relatively rare periods when the child is seated on the verandah or in the living room instead of being in a carrying shawl. Naturally, as the child gets older more of this freedom is allowed it, and one sometimes sees a prewalking baby crawling about either in a sitting position with one leg under it or raised up on all fours. I do not recall ever seeing a child crawl on hands and knees. When the child of its own volition begins to stand, it most commonly pulls itself upright holding onto the leg of some near-by adult. Padafan, a child whose development I was able to watch with some consistency, definitely learned to stand by pulling himself up on his mother's leg in an effort to get her attention so that she would pick him up and nurse him. 348

When a youngster begins trying to stand, any adult may play with it and assist it in its efforts at walking, but for both the adult and the child this is a play activity involving neither consistency nor rewards and punishments. Thus his first mastery technique does not depend exclusively upon the assistance of a parent. For about eight children whose ages I could determine with some accuracy walking began not much later than it does with us, which is from the twelfth to the eighteenth 356

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS



153 with which adults make no attempt to interfere. On the contrary, there
is in the culture a highly significant game that actually encourages it.
The game is a version of our "This little pig went to market" rhyme.
153 Taking the child's little finger, the mother says, "This is your young
534 corn. By and by I shall harvest it, roast it, and we shall eat." Taking the
fourth finger, she says, "This is your young beans. By and by I shall
harvest them, boil them, and we shall eat." The game continues, with
the mother naming a different food for each finger. Another version
names a series of foods that the mother will bring back from a bartering
trip to the market. No matter what version is used, at the climax of the
game the mother thrusts the child's hand into its mouth and says,
"Here, eat them. Eat the souls of these foods." The difference between
our game and that of the Alorese is in the latter's striking denouement:
The child is stimulated to anticipate food and is then offered an unsat-
isfactory substitute.

146 It may be pertinent to add here a comment about food, as opposed
to attitudes toward feeding. The diet is high in indigestible carbohy-
drates, such as maize, rice, and beans, all low in proteins. The beans
grown in Alor are not rich in the latter food element.* Meat is a treat
rather than a staple; eggs and fish are rarely eaten. As a result of diet
and feeding habits, a child probably experiences both "hollow hunger"
(sense of emptiness) and "hidden hunger" (malnutrition). They are
not rachitic, however, since vitamins from food and sunlight are plen-
tiful.

### TOILET TRAINING

163 Toilet training is taught gradually and easily. When the child can
walk and "when it is old enough to understand," the mother makes a
point of taking it with her morning and evening when she defecates
either in the privy or outside at the edge of the village. Also, the child
is watched and told to withdraw whenever it needs to eliminate. Moth-
ers report that children learn within a few months to use the proper
places and to clean themselves with leaves. Children are sometimes care-
less in cleaning themselves and as a result may suffer a certain amount of
anal irritation.

One mother, whose time sense was a little more precise than that of
most women, reported that she began training her son at nineteen
months, shortly after he began walking. She claims that in five or six

* W. F. Dennis, D. R. Knolleman, and A. G. Van Veen, "Voedingsonderzoek," *Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 71:431 (March 3, 1931). For a further discussion regarding the place of meat in the Alorese diet, see below, pages 57–58.

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OFS Alor OFS



days he understood. "He is now in his twenty-first month and has not §3 ●
soiled the house in six weeks."

A child who is slow in establishing toilet habits may irritate the mother; then she may shout at him or rap him on the head with her knuckles. However, since sphincter control is instituted relatively late it seems to be a source of little annoyance. Children certainly by the age of three, or five at the latest, are thoroughly trained. I have no data on play with excreta—which does not mean that this does not occur, but it may mean that the problem does not obtrude itself.

Constipation does not seem to be a major problem, despite an indi- §47
gestible carbohydrate diet, which gives most children enlarged abdomens. This judgment concerning constipation rests on the slender evidence that in eighteen months I dispensed only three quarts of castor oil to a total population of about six hundred adults and children. Children certainly represented no more than the proportional two thirds to one half of the people coming for laxatives. Incidentally, they did not have a sufficient repugnance to castor oil to reduce the total consumption.

Bladder control, or at least modesty about urination, seems to come §43
slightly later than sphincter control. I judge this to be the case since it §49
is not unusual to see children of between three and five years standing at the edge of a group and casually urinating without anyone's paying much attention to it. A comparable lack of sphincter control was observed only twice and both times it brought angry scolding from adults. Similarly flatuses, if too persistent, may provoke cross comments, but in general little emphasis is placed on the matter, and in view of the carbohydrate diet even adults are less controlled, and are required to be less controlled, than Euro-Americans in this respect.

### BATHING

The cold bath, which at this stage of development replaces the warm §43
sponge-off of infancy, provokes extreme and vocal protest in children. §55
When a child is old enough to stand with some steadiness, it is bathed by having cold water poured over it. Unless the day is hot, the child stands shivering until it dries off. And there is no reward for the ordeal such as is offered by some American Indians, who promise their children health and strength in return for the discomforts of cold baths.

The mother, or some older person, usually scrubs the child, hand- §55
ling it with less gentleness than is shown an infant. The treatment of the child would seem rough to us, but it must be remembered that it is

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5



Even though there are these numerous traumata in connection with feeding, weaning is not traumatic. But the readiness with which children suck at objects which resemble breasts is a further indication of the effects of poor maternal care. A child free of hunger tensions can expand the character of its contacts with the mother, and once she becomes a dependable object the child has a reliable buffer against the outer world. If this buffer is absent, nothing but anxiety and inhibitions can result. This shows itself chiefly as a lack of interest both in the outer world and in those ego components through which mastery of it is effected.

Two additional features must be mentioned. First, the mother does not find the feeding of the child particularly pleasurable. This is very likely to be the case when the mother herself has been through the experience that she now imposes on the child. A second point is that in many of the illnesses which the child suffers at this time, it is the father who is blamed for having broken a taboo or one of the abstinences imposed upon him during the early life of the child. In this way the mother escapes a blame which she undoubtedly feels.

The fact that mothers occasionally masturbate their children while feeding them is no commentary on their sex morality but on the fact that the masturbatic activity is used as a palliative; and it is very likely that sexual gratification thus becomes very early in life established as a means of placating the child for frustrations suffered in other directions.

With regard to training the child to walk and talk, little deliberate effort is made. From comparisons with children in our society one can safely deduce the fact that the child is subject to a continuous series of frustrations in its efforts to establish some mastery over the world. This means also that positive and enterprising attitudes toward the world are not developed, for failures foster inhibitions.

While the child is thus not encouraged to strong ego formation in early childhood, there is an extenuating circumstance in the fact that it is not subjected to discipline which it cannot understand. There is a conspicuous absence of restrictive discipline, particularly in connection with anal training. Here it may be noted that the Alorese seem to have no buttock erotic sensitivity or consciousness. This zone is seemingly devoid of significance—nor is it used in punishing children, as is the case in our society. Anal training seems to be synchronous with growth and is taught mainly by example. Hence these activities cannot contribute very much to the formation of the ego ideal.

2: DuBois E-5 (1938-1939) 1941 OFS Alor OFS



An older sibling, real or classificatory, or an old woman may be near and will care for a whole group of children in a desultory fashion but no one is responsible for feeding the child and no one is greatly incommoded by his crying. When the mother goes off to work, the child is left from about eight in the morning until five in the afternoon without regular provision of food. This does not mean that he is left entirely without food, but that all he gets during that time may be cold bits an older child cooks more or less willingly and generously to him when he begs for it. Again, of course, there is marked variation in children's experiences during this period. They may have a solicitous older sister who can be spared from field work and who will provide relatively good care. There may be a grandmother who works less hard and frequently in the gardens. But, in any case, after the child learns to walk, his frustrations with respect to hunger are increased, and simultaneously he loses the constant handling and support he had during the first stage of life in the carrying shawl. That the acquisition of his first skill in the independent mastery of the outer world, *i.e.* walking, should be associated with two severe deprivations may well have larger personality repercussions in the realm of ego development than there is space to consider in this paper.

To add to the strain of this period and to reinforce it further, the weaning of the child may be hastened at this time because another sibling is expected. Rarely does one see a child of three or four still nursing. Although weaning is done simply by pushing the child away gently or placing the breast beyond its reach, there is no doubt that difficulties accumulate at this stage of development. Anal training, walking, and talking have not yet been deliberately instituted. They are allowed to take their own course. In other words, the child has acquired few skills during the first two or three years of life. Those which he has acquired have been by means of restrictive or absorptive disciplines. It is not surprising that this is the time par excellence of temper tantrums. These continue, as might be expected, with marked individual variation up to the ages of five to eight. Adult reactions to children's tantrums are characterized by great inconsistency. One day a mother will ignore the child; the next she may be irritated and strike it; on still another occasion she may deceive it into thinking she is not deserting it, only to slip away when the child has been diverted; or on still other occasions, especially at night, the child may be threatened with the local bogy-man who, incidentally, is not a very fearsome figure. In addition then to their inconsistency, all active disciplines are of the restrictive type. I have never seen a mother promise a child a reward for being good and then keep her promise.

A clear example of the mode of early childhood and the uncertainties of the persons on whom the child depends for its gratifications is found in a series of statements contained in Tilapuda's autobiography. She tells of caring for a younger sister called Malkauni.

> On the way [to the fields] Malkauni cried a lot, so I put her down and slapped her. Then I talked nicely to her and we went on when she was quiet. . . . When Malkauni was a little older, she would cry to go to the fields with me. If I were not angry with her, I would take her along with me to dig sweet potatoes. I would give her the big ones and keep the small ones. She was always crying. She cried to be fed; she cried to go places. I hit her on the head with my knuckles and then I would feed her. She cried because she was hungry.